## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Guinan - 343-5634

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INTERIOR PROPOSES REGULATIONS FOR FISHING VESSEL CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE

The Department of the Interior today proposed regulations to govern the operation of a new program to encourage construction of fishing vessels in U. S. shipyards. The proposed rules are being published in the Federal Register.

The United States Fishing Fleet Improvement Act (Public Law 88-498) provides for payment, under certain conditions, of the difference between building a vessel in U. S. shippards and in less expensive foreign shippards, with a maximum payment of 50 percent of the U. S. cost. The legislation was signed by President Johnson August 30, 1964.

To be eligible, a vessel must be "of advance design," as further defined in the proposed regulations, but must not cause economic hardship to efficient vessel operators already working in the same fishery. An applicant must possess the ability, experience, resources and other qualifications necessary to operate and maintain the new vessel. A hearing is to be held on each application.

Under the proposed rules, the vessel must be a modern one which will upgrade the fleet, and special consideration will be given vessels which will provide a significant contribution in helping the domestic fishery meet foreign competition.

The legislation authorized the appropriation of \$10 million annually for the program. Just before adjourning, Congress voted a  $$2\frac{1}{2}$$  million appropriation to operate the program for the current fiscal year.

Persons desiring to comment on the proposed regulations may do so within 30 days of the date of publication in the Federal Register. Comments should be addressed to the Director, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 20240.

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